



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 10

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OFFICE OF
ENVIRONMENTAL
CLEANUP

Ms. Kristin Ryan, Director
Division of Spill Prevention and Response
Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation
555 Cordova St.
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Dear Ms. Ryan:

It is my understanding that Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is currently in the process of evaluating the reference dose for sulfolane in order to determine a site-specific cleanup level for off-site groundwater contaminated with sulfolane. As a part of this process, DEC sought the input of independent, national experts through a panel convened by Toxicology Excellence for Risk Assessment. TERA has released their report summarizing the panel's recommendations. DEC has carefully reviewed the report, which will be considered as part of the re-evaluation of the selected cleanup level for sulfolane.

Additionally, DEC has nominated sulfolane into the National Toxicology Program, which accepted sulfolane into the program in 2012. The toxicity studies to evaluate the health effects of exposure to sulfolane are underway.

Given the uncertainty that exists regarding the toxicity values associated with sulfolane, and the high number of residents who potentially face direct exposure to the chemical in their drinking water, the EPA strongly encourages DEC to wait until the NTP studies are completed before setting a sulfolane cleanup level for groundwater. The NTP studies are expected to provide a clearer picture of the risks associated with sulfolane exposure.

The EPA will continue to coordinate with DEC and provide support as necessary. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Brandon Perkins, Site Assessment Manager for the Flint Hills Refinery site. You can reach Brandon by phone at (206) 553-6396 or by email at perkins.brandon@epa.gov.

Sincerely,

Richard Albright, Director
Office of Environmental Cleanup

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